

Minutes

March 10, 2021

Executive Committee

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the South Carolina Military Base Task Force convened on March 10, 2021.

A notice of the meeting was posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

The following people were in attendance: Secretary Will Grimsley (SC Dept of Veterans' Affairs), Joe McLamb (Chief of Staff, SC Dept of Veterans' Affairs), Dan Beatty (Chairman), Mary Graham (Vice Chair and Charleston), Carl Blackstone (Columbia), Steve Creech (Sumter), Neal Pugliese (Beaufort), Jim Clifford (Aiken/North Augusta), Cynthia Davis (Department of Commerce), MG Van McCarty (Adjutant General), Brandon Wilson (Public Information Director, SC Dept of Veterans' Affairs), and Sandy Claypoole (Program Manager).

Chairman Dan Beatty discussed modifications to MBTF's Strategic Plan. Those will include efforts to sustain and grow the military presence in South Carolina, and to enhance the quality of life for service members and their families. He also discussed the opportunities with the Defense Communities Infrastructure Program (DCIP), climate change efforts and Neal Pugliese's new role as the representative for the Beaufort Military Enhancement Committee (MEC).

Reports from Communities

Mary Graham – Charleston

Current only female 4 star has been nominated to run Transcom. Joint Base Charleston recently hosted the 82nd Airborne for a couple of months. Approximately 4000 people in January and February from Fort Bragg. Coast Guard has a 10 year expansion planned for Charleston. Will include a land swap with the Ports Authority. Will bring in an additional 2500 Guardsmen and five cutters will be built. Corps of Engineers is doing a study on flooding. Local government is working on a plan for the expansion of 526 Don Holt Bridge from North Charleston to Daniel Island.

Carl Blackstone – Columbia

BG Patrick Michaelis, Deputy Commanding General at Fort Knox Recruiting Command, will join us in May. Fort Jackson has a higher graduation rate (over 90%) this year during COVID that they have had previously. Chamber will host a Town Hall meeting with outgoing BG Beagle next week with Judi Gatson of WISTV.

Steve Creech – Sumter

Shaw is quiet. One squadron deployed. Broke ground on the 25th attach squadron (RPAs) 100,000 square foot building. \$46 million MILCON project. Change of the Command for the 16th Air Force this summer. On February 5th, there was a job fair at Shaw with SC Manufacturer Alliance. This included military spouses and Veterans as well. 137 participants with over 40 companies. At least six people got job offers.

Neal Pugliese – Beaufort

MCAS is expanding and going strong. Concerns about the Naval Hospital because the Defense Health Agency is pushing defense agencies onto the economy. Parris Island should restore normal operations in the December timeframe. Military Engagement Council (MEC) working on a one stop for employment in the Beaufort region. Workforce availability is an issue with employers in Beaufort.

Jim Clifford – Aiken/North Augusta

BG Paul Stanton will be the next Cyber Center of Excellence Commander at Fort Gordon. MG Hersey will stay at Fort Gordon. Governor McMaster will visit Fort Gordon on 5 May.

MG Van McCarty – National Guard

Number one priority is the Readiness Center with USC Aiken. Have the Federal dollars and working with the state for a \$15 million match. Second priority is the Readiness Center at Joint Base Charleston. Continuing to work on armory revitalization. There was a meeting with the SC Delegation last week at McEntire. There were three Congressmen there and representatives from each delegation. Hoping for McEntire to make the next round of placement for the F-35s. Senate Finance Committee meeting next week. Part of the 169th Fighter Wing just returned from exercises. Next mission in the next 30 – 45 days. 600 soldiers deployed in support of COVID mission. Medics today have given over 41,000 COVID vaccines.

Cynthia Davis – Department of Commerce

One of our greatest assets is our partnership with South Carolina Manufacturers Extension Partnership (SCMEP). Match funding to companies for projects for quality, sales marketing, business development, plant layout and workforce. Have helped DoD contractors with product development in 2017 and 2018 and now help DoD contractors with cybersecurity. Will be hosting a Cybersecurity workshop on 1 September in conjunction with the Charleston Defense Contractors Association. The updated Economic Impact Study is key to the mission of Commerce in helping with the DoD supply chain.

Secretary Grimsley announced in May we will host a Commanders Luncheon in Charleston as a halfway point between the annual Governor's Commanders Brief.

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Claypoole